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15 June 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. GILPATRIC

SUBJECT: Satellite Reconnaissance Contingency Plan

I refer to my memorandum to you dated 9 March 1962, Subject: SAMOS Contingency Plan. As you know, it is technically possible that a malfunction on orbit could cause re-entry of a reconnaissance satellite capsule at such a time and place that the full capability of the system would be exposed to either friendly or hostile foreign powers. A proposed SAMOS Contingency Plan, to be utilized in such an event, was forwarded with the above-referenced memorandum. A like contingency plan for CORONA-ARGON (Discoverer) has been in effect since 19 July 1961.

With publication and implementation of DOD Directive 5200.13, it no longer appears necessary or desirable to have separate contingency plans for these two systems. In fact, since the DOD Directive prohibits public identification of military satellite launches, the problem and potential embarrassment inherent in maintaining the unclassified and open Discoverer program cover for CORONA and ARGON have been eliminated; also, there is no necessity to publicly differentiate between projects.

Accordingly, it seems advantageous to have a single contingency plan applicable to all satellite reconnaissance vehicles. A draft of such a plan is inclosed, which I suggest be distributed to the appropriate people and discussed at the next meeting of the Special Group.

/s/

Joseph V. Charyk
Under Secretary of the Air Force

Inclosure
Satellite Reconnaissance
Contingency Plan (S)

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BYE 1379-62

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DRAFT
15 June 1962

SATELLITE RECONNAISSANCE CONTINGENCY PLAN

SITUATION:

Although all possible precautions are taken, it is possible that a malfunction or orbit may cause re-entry of a reconnaissance satellite capsule to occur at other than the prescribed time and place, exposing the full reconnaissance capability of the particular vehicle to a hostile or foreign power. In addition to the possibility of the capsule re-entering via parachute, there is also the possibility of the capsule re-entering with a ballistic impact in the event the particular malfunction(s) allow re-entry to occur with the heat shield retained and the parachute inoperative. In this case, although the capsule would be crushed at impact, tests have shown that the film would not be damaged beyond usefulness, and would thus also expose the full reconnaissance capability of that particular vehicle system.

CONTROL OF PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Director of Special Projects, OSAF: Whenever the possibility exists that any type of capsule re-entry is likely to occur at other than the prescribed time and place, the Director of Special Projects, OSAF, will immediately notify the Under Secretary of the

Air Force and keep him continuously informed of the situation until such re-entry is certain, or the danger is past. The Director of Special Projects will arrange for standby recovery forces to remain in place or in readiness to handle unforeseen situations leading to a possible subsequent retrieval in those cases where the capsule re-enters over ocean areas. If it can be determined through evidence that re-entry would occur outside the prescribed area, but over the ocean area, search will be initiated by the Director of Special Projects through available air-sea rescue facilities.

Headquarters, U.S. Air Force: No Air Force or Department of Defense press announcement will be made except by specified authorization of the Under Secretary of the Air Force (Dr. Charyk). If statements are to be released, they may be released by the Air Force Space Systems Division, but only at the direction of the Under Secretary of the Air Force.

Department of State: When it is determined or suspected by the Under Secretary of the Air Force (Dr. Charyk), after clearing with the Secretary of Defense or the Deputy Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Deputy Director (Research), CIA (Dr. Scoville), that a foreign power is involved, the responsibility for all action and public announcements will transfer to the Department

of State. No comment will be made by the Department of Defense or Hq USAF unless released by the Department of State (Mr. Alexis Johnson, Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs, or his alternate, Mr. Roger Hilsman). Should it prove that the capsule has been retrieved by a hostile foreign power (Soviet or Soviet Bloc country) and their reaction identifies the contents of the capsule with a reconnaissance effort, the attached statement should be made to the press in response to query, by the person designated by the Department of State.

There will be no further comment other than what may be necessary by the Department of State to effect return of the capsule and contents to the United States Government.

1 Attachment
Statement for Press

This document consists of 1 pages
No. ___ of 6 Copies, Series A.

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State Proposed Redraft of Contingency Press Release

A satellite capsule containing photographic equipment has prematurely re-entered the atmosphere and apparently was retrieved by the authorities of _____.

We long ago announced our intention to develop photographic potentialities of satellites as an essential instrument in the exploration and exploitation of space. Our progress in this field is a matter of public record. We hope that in the interest of furthering international space cooperation the capsule will be returned.

SECRET

We long ago announced our intention to develop photographic reconnaissance potentalities of satellites. The details of the research and development efforts of this nature have naturally been classified and not given public release, however, our general intent was publicly known even before the earliest successful earth satellite vehicles were flown. A recoverable capsule containing photographic reconnaissance equipment re-entered the atmosphere and apparently was retrieved by the authorities of _____.

Our satellite reconnaissance program is entirely peaceful in intent and poses no threat to any nation. Its objective is to help maintain World peace by reducing the possibility of surprise attack from closed societies.

SENDER WILL CHECK CLASSIFICATION TOP AND BOTTOM

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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	ACTION		DIRECT REPLY		PREPARE REPLY
	APPROVAL		DISPATCH		RECOMMENDATION
	COMMENT		FILE		RETURN
	CONCURRENCE		INFORMATION		SIGNATURE

Remarks:

Prepare for forwarding to DCL, State + Taylor.

Use approved ¶ out Johnson committee document. Cheryk also approved reference to Samos to cover Discoverer program.

FOLD HERE TO RETURN TO SENDER

FROM: NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NO.	DATE

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